Community Forestry and Rural Livelihood

(A case study of Forest dependent community; Sundar Community Forestry Users Group, Makwanpur District of Nepal)

Submitted to

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Submitted by

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1. Introduction

Land-locked and sandwiched between two neighboring giants, China and India, Nepal is a land of enormous geographical diversity possessing natural resources where forest plays pivotal role. Nepal bear attractive package of nature embracing rich biological diversity it occupies 0.09% of land area in the world, which has 2.3% of global biodiversities. Green forests are the wealth of Nepal, different types of forest cover are found in different region of Nepal.

The main forest management strategy of Nepal, based on forest dependent peoples’ participation, is known as community forestry (CF). This approach was formally introduced in the late 1970s to encourage active participation of local people in forest management as a means to improve livelihoods. The community forestry policy of Nepal is regarded as a progressive method for establishing rights of local people over forest resources; however, the promotion of forest-based enterprises has been limited. Recently, more CFUGs are initiating poverty alleviation activities, helping to establish community forestry as a recognized pro-poor program. The main areas of intervention include the promotion of income generating activities and establishment of concessions for forest products distribution. The income generating activities include domestication of non-timber forest products (NTFPs), support to livestock production, and establishment of Forest-Based Small-Scale Enterprises (FBSSes).

After twenty-five years of program implementation, most of the community forests have regenerated, but many new issues related to social aspects have emerged. These issues, which need further discussion and resolution, include selling surplus products from community forests, value additions of these products through enterprise development, multiple forest management, and better coverage of the program, use of community forests for income generation and poverty alleviation, and better fund utilization by CFUGs.

These user groups constitute about 35 percent of the country’s total population. The achievements of the community forestry can be seen in terms of better forest condition, better social mobilization, and income generation for rural development and institutional building at grass root level. It has been recognized that community forestry has potential to contribute significantly to improve people's livelihoods as a means of poverty reduction (CFD, 2006 as cited by Kandel, 2006). CF is contributing to livelihood promotion in many ways. These include fulfilling the basic needs of local communities, investing money in supporting income generation activities of the poor people, providing access to the forestland (Kanel and Niraula, 2004).

In recent years there has been extensive discussion of the linkages between forests and livelihood. It is clear that rural people in Nepal make extensive use of the forest resources as a part of their livelihood system. There are many aspects of this use including direct consumption of forest products and services (food, timber for construction, fuelwood, fodder for livestock, water, forest farming), collection of forest products for sale (hunting, NTFP collection etc) and the use of forest products for food security in times of seasonal shortages, drought and economic stress. The extent of use and level of dependency is highly variable. Nevertheless forests are often of great importance in these ways. In addition to the use of forest products for livelihood support and risk management, forests are potentially valuable to rural people as means of income generation and poverty reduction. The problem with forest resources in both of these contexts is that forest resources are frequently under
the official control of state forest agencies which generally restrict the use of forest by rural people, particularly where serious income generation is concerned. Thus, the potential for forests to contribute to poverty reduction usually involves question of tenure, access and benefit sharing between the state and the forest users.

However, this paper examines the existing and potential linkages between rural people and forest in Nepal with the aim of developing an improved understanding of potential land use pattern of community forest for alleviating poverty of farmers (rural communities)

2. Nepal’s Land use Pattern
Nepal’s land stretches across 147,181 Km² and is divided into three distinct ecological zones running East-West: Terai in the south, Hills and Mountains in the middle and Himalayas to the north. Over 600 rivers and streams flow from north to south and dissect over landscape into hundreds of small hills, naturally isolating communities from one another. The unique and varied topography whilst undoubtedly beautiful renders 80% of the land uncultivable; this places even greater emphasis and importance on the way small percentage of cultivable land is managed and utilized.

Nepal is home to nearly 23 million people (2001 census), comprising 100 ethnic groups each with their own distinct language, culture and life style. Nepal is politically divided into five development region, 14 geographical zones, 75 administrative districts, 58 municipalities and 3,915 VDCs. Each region displays huge diversity in human settlement patterns, ethnicity, land distribution, resources and levels of economic development.

Land use in Nepal necessarily adapts to the diverse topography. Based on the agriculture census of 2001 -02, 94.1% of total land holding are agricultural land, this equates to 24.98 million hectares. Landlessness has a considerable negative impact on the socioeconomic development, cultural identity, political participation and overall human rights of a person in Nepal. Land ownership is closely tied to citizenship and citizenship is closely linked with participation and social service.

Table 1: Land Use Change over Time (years) Area in Hectares

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use Types (Ha)</th>
<th>Year 1991/1992</th>
<th>Year 2001/2002</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Himal</td>
<td>Hills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultivated land</td>
<td>207761</td>
<td>1721450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Total)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-cultivated land</td>
<td>494998</td>
<td>436300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Total)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest (Total)</td>
<td>233346</td>
<td>4435809</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shrub</td>
<td>137800</td>
<td>511608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grass land</td>
<td>132644</td>
<td>1589278</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure above shows that agricultural land and forest area are more used land use practices in Nepal. Rural population largely depends on agriculture farm and forest for the fulfillment of their fundamental needs and livelihood upliftment. Forest covering 39.6 percentage of total land area in Nepal is partly giving shelter and food security to the numerous farmers residing in the rural part of the country.

3. Nepal’s Forest Cover

Based on management and ownership, Nepal’s forest has been classified as Private Forest and National Forest.

a. Private Forest: This forest area refers to trees on private agricultural and/or forest land used for catering fuelwood, fodder and other basic resources in general providing saleable produce. Private forest can be of just a trees planted in small woodlots or trees integrated with agricultural crops as agro-forestry. Private forests are highly encouraged in national scenario encouraging more trees on farmland. Private forest can reduce the pressure on national land catering basic needs of rural communities. It also adds benefits to land stability and fertility.

b. National Forest:
   i. Leasehold Forest: This forest is a degraded patch of national forest handed over to individual, organization or the poor people on lease of forty years. The main goal of leasehold forest lies in forest development and poverty alleviation. Leasehold may be of two kinds i.e. one is for pro-poor and next is for individual or organization.
   ii. Religious Forest: A patch of national forest allocated and managed by institution or a religious group for the purpose of religion and culture and their uses limited to the religious purposes. The forest plan for religious forest is prepared with help of forest technician and approved by District Forest Officer to legalize.
   iii. Community Forest: Part of national forest handover to ‘users’ group pursuant the forest for its development, conservation and utilizations for the collective interest. It is village-level forestry activity, decided on collectively and implemented on communal land, where local populations participate in the planning, establishing, managing and harvesting of forest crops and so receive a major proportion of the socio-economic and ecological benefits from the forest.
   iv. Government Managed Forest: Government managed forest is a forest land being managed by the local forest bureaucracy, which is headed by the district forest officer. This is divided into ranges, each range into units. The district forest office deals with all the procedures concerning the forest such as issuing permits for collection of forest products, management and supervision.
   v. Government Conserved Forest: This classified forest type offer conservation efforts that are mostly concentrated in protected areas such as National Park, Wildlife Reserve, Conservation Areas and Hunting Reserves.
4. Evolution of Community Forest & its Linkages with Livelihood and Poverty

The achievements of the community forestry can be seen in terms of better forest condition, better social mobilization, and income generation for rural development and institutional building at grass root level. It has been recognized that community forestry has potential to contribute significantly to improve people's livelihoods as a means of poverty reduction (CFD, 2006 as cited by Kandel, 2006). CF is contributing to livelihood promotion in many ways. These include fulfilling the basic needs of local communities, investing money in supporting income generation activities of the poor people, providing access to the forestland (Kanel and Niraula, 2004).

After 1957 when all forest was nationalized and under state control, forest degradation and massive deforestation was accounted where people could hardly find ownership in forest. Community forestry was initiated in 1978 with the first amendment to Forest Act 1961. After the restoration of democracy in 1990, government reframed this act in 1993 for the sustainable management of forest resources under common property right (Paudel, 2007 cited ). The new Forest Act of 1993 and Forest Regulation 1995 provide a clear regulation of the CF and the process of handing over forest to the local communities by forming users groups. This Act defines community forest as a part of national forest handed over to a CFUG (Community forestry users’ group) for its development, protection and utilization.

Similarly, in 1987 first national community forestry workshop took place in Kathmandu, Nepal. Workshop was represented by participants experienced in Community forestry; workshop explored different modalities of community forestry benefits and future activities in those regards. In 1989 master plan for forestry sector was formed (MPFS) which also demarks clear outline for community forestry. In 1995, with the objective of securing community forestry users’ right one national level federation (CSO) was formed (Federation of Community forestry Users’ Nepal, FECOFUN) having its chapter in each district of Nepal. Since then, Community forestry, as an identifiable implementation strategy evolved in its contemporary form at this time, and came onto the international agenda as an approach to address widespread forest loss and its consequent environmental degradation and negative impact on rural livelihoods and poverty.

At the global level, various forms of community involvement in forest management are becoming more widespread and accepted. Presently 11% of the world’s forests are managed by communities, a far greater area than is managed by the forest industry and about the same area as all private landholders combined. This figure is expected to rise from 378 million ha of community owned and managed land in 2001 to 740 million ha by 2015 – representing 45% of the world’s forest estate (Bull and White 2002). Much of this area is managed under some form of collaborative arrangement involving sharing power between stakeholder groups.

The immediate livelihood benefits derived by rural households – as inputs to agriculture, food security, and cash incomes – bolster strong collective action wherein local communities actively and sustainably manage forest resources. Community forests also became the source of diversified investment capital and raw material for new market-oriented livelihoods. Community Forestry shows traits of political, financial and ecological sustainability, including emergence of
a strong legal and regulatory framework, and robust civil society institutions and networks. However, a continuing challenge is to ensure equitable distribution of benefits to women and marginalized groups. Lessons for replication emphasize experiential learning, establishment of a strong civil society network, flexible regulation to encourage diverse institutional modalities, and responsiveness of government and policy-makers to a multi-stakeholder collaborative learning process.

Securing community rights to forests and improved use of products can foster more sustainable management and constitute an important component of livelihoods and poverty alleviation. Forestry can provide value and additional livelihood income sources, as well as safety net functions, but only if communities have secure rights to forests and forest land and are able to add value.

5. Linking Farmers with Forest

Nepal’s landscape and forest endowment reflect the topographic and physiographic diversity, intermixed with the mosaic of agriculture farming with forests in between. Farming, forests and livestock rearing have traditionally been integrated, but now with demographic pressure, and market penetration, the dependence on forests for livelihood is receding in and around urban centers. In the hinterland, fuelwood and other biomass still provide 96.5 percent of household energy.

About 85 percent of the total population of about 27 million people still resides in rural areas. Although subsistence agriculture is still the main occupation of about two third of population, their contribution is a meager one third of the total gross domestic product (GDP) of Nepal—indicating that productivity of and thus the returns from agriculture are quite low. Moreover, the distribution of private farms is so skewed that about 60 percent of farmers and peasants are functionally landless. This has compelled many young people to migrate to overseas for employment, and for others either to grab the private land or to encroach the forests in the plain for farming.

Rural life is closely related to the forest. In Nepalese context, traditionally rural people have been fulfilling their basic daily product needs from forest. Total Nepal national income is being generated from agriculture sector. Farmers are the main contributors to add the national income. Farmers are the rural communities their livelihood support depends on agriculture and livestock. So far the livestock is concerned it is dependable on forestry. Livestock play an important role in local food security in developing countries especially for the farmers. Farm manures are often the sole means of soil fertilization in areas that are far from the road and where farmers are unable to afford fertilization. Apart from the livestock rural community are interlinked with their daily needful resources such as construction material, furniture, medicinal goods, fuelwood and other income generating involvement from forest products.

6. Background to Makwanpur District
Makwanpur District, a part of Narayani Zone, is one of the seventy-five districts of Nepal. The district with Hetauda as its district headquarters covers an area of 2,426 km2 and the population
is currently estimated to be close to half a million. Bhimfedi one of the market of district was the traditional route to enter Kathmandu valley from the southern part of Nepal.

### Table 2: Land use status of Makwanpur district

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N</th>
<th>Land type</th>
<th>Area (ha)</th>
<th>Percentage in relation to district total areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Forest land</td>
<td>1,44,558</td>
<td>59.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Agriculture land</td>
<td>61,489</td>
<td>25.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bushes area</td>
<td>4,968</td>
<td>2.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>River</td>
<td>16,710</td>
<td>6.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Conservation area</td>
<td>15,125</td>
<td>6.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Industrial area</td>
<td>1,607</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,44,457</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 6.1 Demography

Total population of Makwanpur district is 392,604 (2001) which includes 199,144 male and 193,460 female. About 82.5% of the population belongs to rural areas of the district while rests 17.44% belong to urban areas. Average population density of Makwanpur District is 162 people per square km which is slightly higher than the national average (157 people per square km). Total household of the district are 71,112 with average of 5.52 members per household/family (DDC, 2007).

#### 6.2 Caste and Ethnicity

Makwanpur district is diverse in caste and ethnic composition as all four castes and several ethnic groups reside over here. Tamang is the dominant ethnic group with the population of about 47% Brahmin and chhetry ranked second and third position respectively. Magar and Chepan ethnic group have also a representative population with 4.57% and 3.91 % followed by Dalit with 2.7% chepang ethnic group in the district practice shifting cultivation and some Dalit depends on forest for charcoal for subsistence through their traditional occupation.

#### 6.3 Economy and livelihood

The major economy of the district is subsistence farming where about 80% of the total population depends on agriculture and livestock.

Major livelihood option of the district, depicted below:

- **Agriculture / Farming**: 82.7%  
- **Business/Industry/Service**: 17.3%  

*Source: DDC, 2007*

#### 6.4 Forest Condition in Makwanpur District

Makwanpur district is rich in biodiversity due to a high variation in altitude and climate. Forest and shrub together covers 59.14% of the total area of the district. The average volume of growing stock is 152 m$^3$/ha with minimum of 142 m$^3$/ha and maximum 162 m$^3$/ha (DFRS, 1992). Major forest types found in Makwanpur are Sal forest, terai hardwood forest, chirpine forest, upper mountain hardwood, quercus forest and riverian forest. Sal forest is the most dominant forest with 50% of the total volume of reachable forest in the district.
Table 3: Land use type of Makwanpur district

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N</th>
<th>Land use type</th>
<th>Area (Hectare)</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Forest</td>
<td>144,558</td>
<td>59.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>61,489</td>
<td>25.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bushes &amp; Pasture Land</td>
<td>4968</td>
<td>2.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>River</td>
<td>16710</td>
<td>6.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Protected Areas</td>
<td>15125</td>
<td>6.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Industrial Area</td>
<td>1607</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>244,457</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The forest resources in Makwanpur district are managed through major four approaches i.e. community forestry, leasehold forestry, government managed forestry and protected areas.

Table 4: Forest type based on management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N</th>
<th>Forest Type</th>
<th>Potential Area (ha)</th>
<th>Handed over area</th>
<th>Percentage of handed over compare to potential area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Community Forest</td>
<td>58,008</td>
<td>50,796.74</td>
<td>87.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Leasehold forest</td>
<td>12,825.25</td>
<td>1,580.97</td>
<td>12.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Other forest classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N</th>
<th>Forest Type</th>
<th>Area (ha)</th>
<th>Area in compare to total forest (percentage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Religious forest</td>
<td>10.59</td>
<td>0.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Conservation forest</td>
<td>23,274.63</td>
<td>16.100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Government managed</td>
<td>69142.35</td>
<td>47.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DFSP Makwanpur, 2065 B.S

7. Community forestry in the District

Community forestry broadly refers to the transfer of national forests to local communities organized in CFUG for protection, management and Utilization of forest resources. Community forestry program was implemented in the district since its initiation in the country back in 1978. Since then community forestry has been source of income and employment opportunities for rural communities. Total of 362 community forestry have been formed covering 62304.46 ha. CFUG practices technical forest management activities guided by forest department viz controlled firing, thinning, pruning, cleaning where technical input is being provided by forest officials from district forest office. CFUG in the district has been successfully implementing different income generation activities for supporting and uplifting rural poor livelihood and conserving forest resources simultaneously.

Thumbs up

Among 362 community forestry in the district, this study site focused on Sundar Community forestry users group which lies in a close proximity to the city.

Community Forestry Users’ Group (CFUGs) 362
Handed over community forestry users group 355
Handed over forest area 62304.46 ha
Benefited households 57167
Benefited population: 285835
No of women users group: 6
(Source: Forest Department, 2066/067)

7.1 Sundar Community Forestry Users Group
Sundar CFUG, established in 2053 B.S, lies in Hetauda municipality ward 1 and 2. Sundar Community Forest is prominently recognized as greenery of the city. It covers the total land of 109.5 ha with 300 household delving near the forest area as a real users’ of Sundar community forest. Among 300 household 103 communities belong from ethnic group. Occupation of 77.73 % of users’ household depends on farming and livestock. Sundar Community Forestry Users Group (CFUG) has working committee of 11 members possessing 7 female and 4 male. Most prominent sps found in this forest are Shorea Robusta, jamun, chilaune, kadam, champ etc.

Table 6: Occupation status of user group in Sundar CFUG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Household in Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Farming / Livestock</td>
<td>77.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>10.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Service</td>
<td>10.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Trade/enterprise</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.1.1 Income generation activities in Sundar CFUG
From the very beginning, Sundar CFUG has been focusing on income generation activities to uplift the living standard of users group. CFUG has formed one sundar income generation group and different income generation activities have been performed from time to time. There are different independent sub-group within it like to perform each activities viz vegetable farming group, goat herding group, Handicraft group etc. In the present context the number income generating activities that is being performed by sundar CFUG is depicted below:

- Amriso plantation (Broom making)
Sundar community forestry users group has been practicing broom making business for supporting poor household. Some area has been allocated for the Amriso plantation within the forest field. The final product from the Amriso plant (Broom) normally gets market in the local area and within the users’ household. CFUG sell the broom in a low rate comparing to the rise of price in the national market viz one broom cost only 20 rupees.

- Handicraft
Users of Sundar CFUG are involved in the business of making handicraft from bamboo. In the initial stage, Sundar CFUG committee chooses 12 household who fall into the category of very poor. This 12 household were
given training on how to make different hand-made showpiece design from the small bamboo which normally has a effective price in both national and local market. These 12 household get involved in the handicraft making business as per the demand/getting order from the costumer. Some portion of forest land has been delineated for the bamboo plantation each year.

- Wooden chair (Bamboo made-Muda)
18 household in the Sundar CFUG were given a training of making wooden chair from bamboo. This training was conducted by the CFUG committee with the urge to catering livelihood option for the rural poor. Household were selected from the well being ranking procedure. These kind of chair are mostly seen common in the rural areas. Bamboos are planted in one ha of land for the raw product in the wooden chair (Muda). This chair are made with high finishing skill and with more hardwork as compare to the chair made in the city area. Market price of one chair is NRs 200 only.

- NTFP farming
Sundar CFUG has started farming of aromatic, herbal, medicinal plants for income generation of the rural household. Plant like Asparagus (Kurilo), Sugandha, Harro, Barro has been planted in some area inside community forestry where users are providing all management needs for the nurturing plants.

- Vegetable farming
CFUG has selected 22 poor household for operating vegetable farming in some portion of community forestry land. These selected household sole occupation lies in farming only. Seasonal vegetable, fruits and annual crop has been planted since 2 years allocating some portion of community forest. People involved in such farming take their vegetable in the local market and in city (hetauda) bazaar where they get desired price.

- Goat herding
This is one of the major income generating activities perform by Sundar CFUG. There are altogether 60 household being involved in goat herding. In the intiation, CFUG committee formed first group 20 member as a Bakhra palan samuha (goat herding group) and handed one goat to each (20) household. They also formed one group moving fund with 15,000 deposits. This fund has been increased on a monthly basis by input from each household from goat herding group with NRs. 30 as a saving. In the same way now they have formed third group also. After one year completion of first group they firmed second group where they provide goat to each 20 household being handed over by first group.

- Sewing Training
CFUG provided sweater sewing training to the interested users of the community. Now some household has taken sewing as their medium for earning (occupation) through the help of sundar CFUG

- Fire Fighting requirement
During some season, it’s very obvious that sal forest gets fire naturally. Sundar CFUG with support from different donor organization has been able to form a fire line group consisting 24
people who bear a technical training on controlled firing and exhausting. This group also gives a service to other community forest when in need.

User’ Profile
Name: Bal Kumari Bhattarai
Age: 60

Bal kumara Bhattarai, being one of the user of Sundar CFUG, is very much dependent on the forest resources in her day-to-day living. Her main source of income depends on Sal (Sorea Robusta) leaflet and Goat herding. In this old age also she has not stop her occupation of bringing leaflet of Sal from forest and selling it in the local market. Bal Kumari is also member of Sundar independent goat herding group. Now she has total of 7 goats in her small house where she leaves alone. Her life schedule is hugely depends on Sundar CFUG where she goes for stall feeding, grazing her goat, leaflet and fuelwood.

8. Key Lesson & Emerging Issues from CFUG

Community forestry bears potentiality in contributing poverty alleviation and the improvement of rural livelihoods. However, community forestry to be genuinely successful in sustainable poverty reduction, women as well as minorities needs to be involved and empowered (Ellis, 1999) is closely associated with low lends of education and lack of skills. Training and extension program organized through CF increases the skill and knowledge of the users and thus helps to select, design and implement the appropriate livelihood strategy for them. CFUG funds (Financial capital) and CFUG institution (Social Capital) has been used to develop physical capital such as roads, drinking water supply, school and irrigation canal at local level which has certainly help in improving the well being of the people. This creates immense impact on poverty reduction and livelihood diversification.

Community forestry program has explored many learning in terms of empowering women groups depending on forest resources. There are many community forests which has been solely represented and managed by women committee in Nepal. CFUG has driven women capacity from household chores to societal representation. Women in CFUG bears equal roles and work hand-in-hand with male community. Even the disadvantage and ethnic community of rural areas has been empowered from different program implemented in CFUG. Different advocacy tools viz collaboration, coordination, constituency, slogan, protest, press release, lobbying etc used by
community forestry users group, its federation has been success enough to tackle back for their basic rights to resources. Federation of community forestry users Nepal has always been tackling against social and governmental hindrance to secure the users’ rights to forest.

Livelihood study of this CFUG shows that the community forestry program has been supporting rural livelihood more or less sustainable. Improved participation in decision making, different income generation activities is enhancing the interest to developing new schemes for further improvement of livelihood and forest condition. This CFUG shows the cases of rural people who are farmer by occupation being dependent on forest resources for sustainable income earning and dependency of their farming system lies on forest resource. However, with numerous benefits exist; CFUG faces different issues from time to time. Either it’s of forest policy amendment or it’s of land right, tax and contribution CFUG throughout the nation fights for its rights to live with dependency on forest resources. Though there are plenty of income generation activities, it’s always tedious to find easy market hub for the rural population to be sustained. In case of Sundar, CFUG establish number of enterprises, small scale business, market of non timber products for supporting livelihood viz broom, Muda (wooden chair), vegetable but it’s some-how difficult to market channel and right marketing value. Users are selling their product in low price due to lack of abundant skill on product valuation and market strategy.

Other issues lies in utilization where forest have been generally well protected, it seems increasingly likely that majority of FUGs are not utilizing their forests to their full potential in terms of income generation. While trends towards resource degradation have been arrested and in many cases forest cover is reported to be improved, the livelihoods of the local forest dependent poor and disadvantage could have been improved as much as expected.
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